19. Texts

In order to give something of the flavor of this dialect, I append a few short connected texts with an English translation. I am grateful to the noted Gypsy singer and composer, Lefteris Konstandinides, and to the Greek scholar and teacher, Evangelos Marselos, for their assistance in working out the first two passages on the basis of a Greek original supplied by myself.

a. Anglé due brešéndar (1), me dadéske pheáke (*or* phraléske) tšey (2), sas-la tšingará (3) pe romésa. Kodová sas džuvliáris (4). Sevéras (5) pe romnyá (6) voi-da kerdás léske trinén tša(v)én, alá (7) vov sas but šukar rom th'(ay) arakhélas but drom amalinén. I romni léski azarálas(8)-les; phenélas léske: "In seversín-man tha in ladžáilan hitš, mangés te džástar túke katár amaró kher. Ama kay devlésko aláv (9), ma ker kadavá! So ka keráv me tha e tša(v)é, kana k'atšas kórkoru?" Hitš omos o bezbetéri (10) in mangélas te ašunél. So(v)ná (11) voi phendás, "Džanáv but šukár kay ašukerél túke ekhé thanéste yek lubní, tha mangés-la mándar (12) dahá but. Latšés, džátar tha te na bóldes-tut hitš." Soná kadalé tšingarátar airlidilár (13) e dui, ama soná ebúka gyeséndar vov boldiás-pes kheré ka pi romní.

(1) Ablative plural, lit. 'before by two years.'

(2) Periphasis for 'cousin': 'my father's sister's (or brother's) daughter'; but it would be possible also to use the Greek word, ξαδέρφη.

(3) Or *belaves; pe romésa* is associative or instrumental, 'with her husband', *pe* reflexive in force since it refers back to subject.

(4) From *džuvlí* and perhaps a calque on Gk. γυναικάς 'woman-chaser'. It might equally well be a calque on South

Slavic *zenkar*.

(5) From the Turkish-type verb *severim* but given by exception a Romany imperfect ending.

(6) Accusative sing. of *romni* as *tša(v)én* is acc. pl.

(7) *ala* is Greek; *ama* from Turkish is used in next sentence with the same meaning.

(8) Romany preterite from Turkish verb *azmak*. *Murmisarélas-les* from Gk. *του μουρμούραγε* could also have been used.

(9) Oath, 'in God's name', i.e. 'for God's sake.'

(10) In Greek, *ο παλιάνθρωπος* 'wretch, monster'. *Hitš* here, as often, strengthens the negative: 'not at all, not in the least.'

(11) See entry. The Turkish word *sonra* is variously rendered.

(12) Lit. 'than me much more.'

(13) Turkish *ayırmak* 'separate.'

Translation

Two years ago, my cousin (female) had a big fight with her husband. He was a lady-killer. He loved his wife and had had three children by her (lit. and she made him three children), but he was a very handsome man and he often found girl friends. His wife bawled him out. She said to him, "You don't love me and you're not the least bit ashamed. You want to go away from our home, but for God's sake, don't do that! What will I and the children do when we are (lit. will remain) all alone?" However, the brute was not willing to listen. Then she said, 'I know very well that a whore is waiting for you somewhere and you love her better than me. All right, beat it and don't ever come back." After this row the two separated, but after a few days he returned home to his wife.

b. Mo pápo, o Kósta (1) sas askéri kay yek (2) (dunyaváki) tšingár. Vorbisarélas mange but drom e trašané bukyénge kay (3) dikhlás. Xasardás yek kan tha yek partšáva pe nakéske. Yekhé yagalyátar sas phagí léski yek(h) tšank. Yek amál thay dui aver askérya andé-les kay (3) hastanáva. Koté o hekímo(s) dikhlás léske phugnyá; o rat t(h)avdélas katár lésko tšikát. Ama, sar devléske bukyátar (4), e phugnyá latšardilé sona dui tšonéndar. Atšiló ómos ebúka bangó sa e

brešénge (5).

(1) Greek nominative would be Κώστας; many Greek nouns are fitted into Romany patterns by losing a final *-s*.
(2) Cardinal for ordinal.
(3) First ***kay*** is relative pronoun, second ***kay***, three lines below, is more likely to be ***ka*** for some speakers (so also the first ***kay*** in the very first sentence).
(4) Lit. 'as by God's work' i.e. 'as if by a miracle.'
(5) Lit. 'for all (his) years' i.e. 'for the rest of his life.'

Translation

My grandfather, Kosta, was a soldier in the First (World) War. He would talk to me often about the terrible things he had seen (lit. saw). He lost an ear and a part of his nose. He had a leg broken by a bullet. A friend and two other soldiers brought him to a hospital. There the doctor looked at his wounds: blood was flowing from his forehead. But by a miracle his wounds healed after two months. However, he remained a little lame for the rest of his life.

Transcribed conversations:

I. Discussion with two Greek Gypsies; A, Tasos, is a man and B, Anna, a woman.

A. Amén e Romá akaté, avilám and'o Yunáno buté brešéndar (1). Sam kay peïnda breš katé ka o Balamanipé (2).
B. Šel breš, šel.
A. Peïnda breš. Amaré manušá avilé avrál. Katár Indíes. Avér manuša, móli našlám katar Indíes, avér manušá dželé ka o Xoraxanipé, avér manušá dželé ka i Anglía, avér manušá Sófya....kay sa e themá.
B. I bukí léngi sas o tšoripé. Iklen-da te kerén bukí, ta tšoréna.
A. O Rom nastík (3) pakyál averés. Nanastík (4). Nastík pakyál averés, so ka phenél léske te kerél. Mangél te kerél vov, so tšinel leski gogí (5), te kerél vov.

B. In mangél averés pa po šoro (6).
A. Te na kerén tšingará i dunáa, k'avél sa i dunáa (7) barabéri, te na xan-pes (8), te na mundarén-pes; adaá mangél o Rom. In mangél tšingará, beláes. Mangél te traisarél eléfθera (9).

Questioner: So pakyás tu e Fitširénge?

A. Vón-da si amaré manušá. Romá si vón-da....sar traín? Sar traysarás améndа. Vón-da manušá si. In-nay-len(10) lénge thaná te bešén, ta bešén and'e...And'o miláy phirén....and'o miláy sóske phirén. Phirén ta džan kerén bukí ka e tarláes. Kerén bukí oté. Asun, phenav tuke (11). Nay sáde Romá tšorá ta xoxavdžía, si e balamé-da, e alaméa-da. Nay sáde Romá tšorá.....Me alusúrum te bikináv koá te traysaráv. Vón-da kadál tšorén te traysarén. Ute (12) džan te mundarén.

(Questioner): Kazóm Romá si afendiká (13)?

A. Sarú si.
B. Peske.
A. Afendiká piré bukyénge.
B. Peske, pe tšeréske (*?pe khereske?*), kay po kher.
A. But latšo si adaá.

II. Opinions of a third Gypsy, C, a woman:

E guruvéski tsang ka batár and'o rat. Kana ka marés e guruvéski tsang and'o rat, ka batár sa i dunyáva....Pakyáv, soske diklyásas mi de kadyál... Diklyása(s) pe yakhénsa, odoé bukí. Avél yek puri džuvli, tšalel lakó vudár. "Ade tše avri!" (In)kalél-la avrí. Ta ikaldás-la avrí. "Soske tše kalés-man avrí?" "Ále tše, ka sikáv tuke káti (14). Dik itš okoté opré....Dikyél opré, yek galbenósko stefáni. And'e galbenósko stefáni, yek guruv tsiknó galbenósko. Ala but sirlár, but sirlár, afu si galbenósko. Kana ka div (?) o guruv t'avél o rat, ka lísko (15) astraγalos (16), o zomán ka batar sa i dunyáva. Ka tasél i dunyáva e

buté ratéstar.

(1) Ablative, 'from many years', and so 'many years ago'.
(2) Normally, *-ipe* forms abstract nouns, so this word could mean 'Greekness, Hellenism', but here synonymous with *Yunano*.
(3) Lit. 'is not possible that'.
(4) Intensive of ***nastik***.
(5) Modelled loosely on Greek, although κόβει το μυαλό του means 'he is very smart' (lit. 'his brain cuts').
(6) 'On his head', cf. Gk. κάνει του κεφαλιού του 'he does as he pleases'.
(7) Equivalent of Gk. όλος ο κόσμος 'all the world' (= 'everybody'); elision of *-v-* in ***duna(v)a***.
(8) Balkanism, see ***xav*** in glossary.
(9) Greek adverb.
(10) Note multiplication of negatives.
(11) Calque on Gk. άκου να σου πω 'let me tell you something.'
(12) Greek conjunction; ***afu*** in next text is Greek αφού.
(13) Gk. αυθέντης 'master', related to Eng. ***authentic***, passed into Turkish as ***efendim*** (respectful term of address) and was then reborrowed by Greek as αφεντικό 'boss,' used here in plural.
(14) Greek pronoun; ***(h)itš*** in next sentence is used loosely.
(15) Romany pronoun, ***lésko***, pronounced as if with Turkish vowel.
(16) Gk. αστράγαλος 'ankle-bone.'

Translation:

A. We Gypsies here, we came to Greece many years ago. We are (=have been) here in Greece about fifty years.
B. A hundred years, a hundred.
A. Fifty years. Our people came from outside (=abroad). From India. Some, as soon as we left India, others went to Turkey, others went to England, others to Sophia.....to all countries.
B. Their profession was stealing and they go out to do (their) work and steal.
A. A Gypsy cannot believe in anyone else. He cannot. He cannot believe in anyone else, whatever he will tell him to do. He wants to do what he feels like doing, he wants to do.
B. He doesn't want anyone else to control him.

That people not make wars, that everybody come together, that they don't get into fights, that they don't murder one another—that (is what) the Gypsy desires. He doesn't want wars, troubles. He wants to live in freedom.

Questioner: What do you think of the Fitširi? (wandering Gypsies)

A. They too are our people. They are also Gypsies.....How do they live? Just as we live. They too are (our) people. They do not have places of their own to occupy, and they live in the.....in the summer they wander about....why do they wander about in the summer? They wander and go work in the fields. They work there.....Listen to what I'm telling you. It's not just the Gypsies (who are) thieves and liars. The Greeks are too and the Germans. Not just the Gypsies are thieves.....I am learning to sell (this) in order to live. They steal thus (that way) in order to live. And they don't kill (people).

Questioner: How many Gypsies are their own bosses?

A. They all are.
B. Their own.
A. Bosses of their own affairs.
B. Their own, of their house, in their house.
A. This is very good.

C. The bull's foot will sink in blood (i.e. the world will be destroyed). When you will hit the bull's foot in blood, then the world will sink....I think (so), because my mother saw (it) like that. She saw it with her own eyes, that business. An old woman comes (and) knocks at her door. "Hey, come on outside," she gets her outside. And she got her outside. "Hey, why are you getting me outside?" "Come on, I'll show you something. Look up there a bit." She looks up, a golden crown. Inside the golden crown a little golden bull. But it was shining a lot, shining a lot, since it is golden....When the bull will—(?), the blood will come

on his foot, then all the world will sink. The world will drown from (so) much blood.

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